

the Sky Line Trail

SKY LINE TRAIL HIKERS OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

Bulletin No. 51

MAY 1947



SKY LINE HIKERS' STYLE PARADE

Sky Line Trail Hikers

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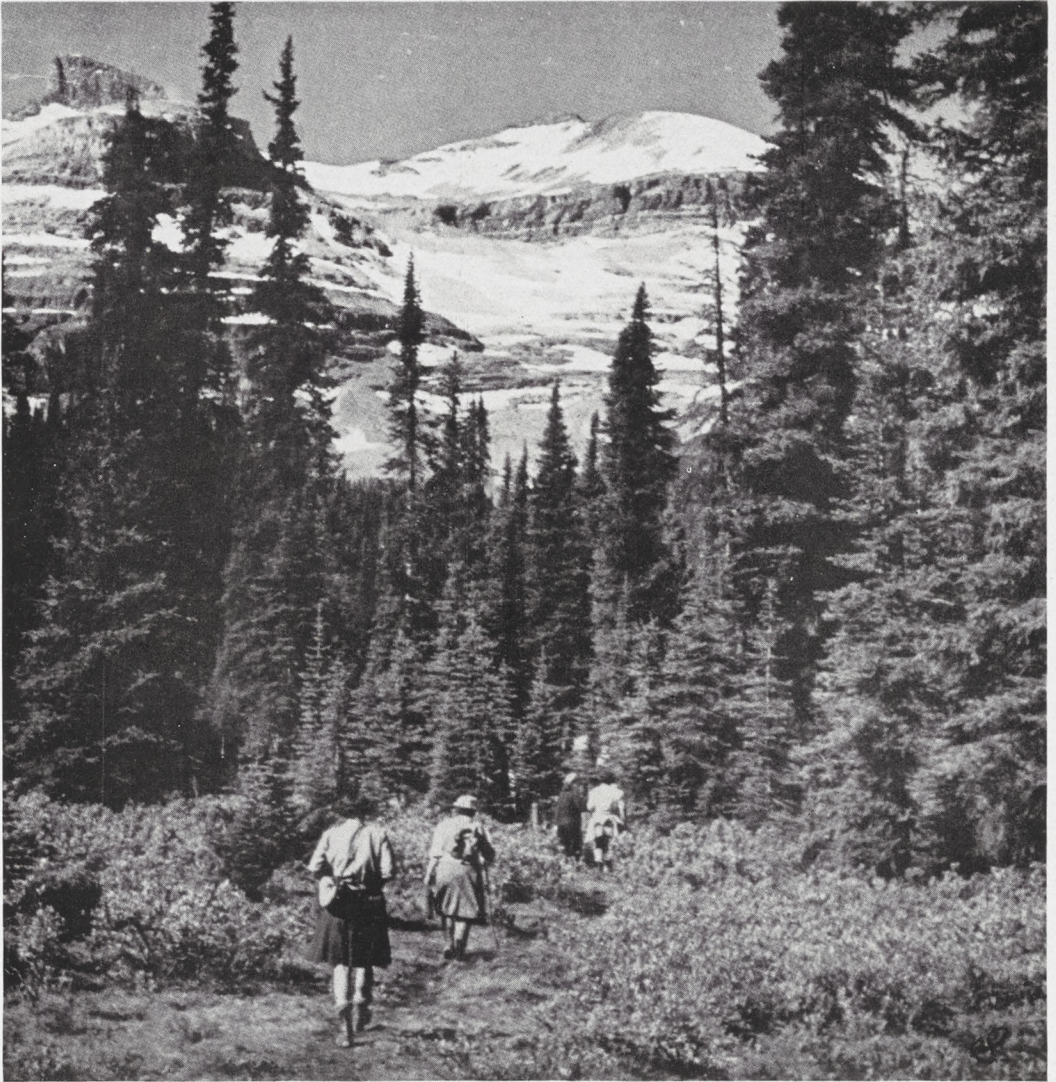
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J. MURRAY GIBBON, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Que.

the Sky Line Trail

SKY LINE TRAIL HIKERS OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES



A Memory of the Little Yoho



The hike from Sunshine Lodge begins — 1947 version

C.P.R. Photo

Latest Plans for Sky Line Camp

AS OUR map shows, the plans for the Sky Line Trail Hikers Camp have been somewhat changed since the last issue of the Bulletin. The site will be at Egypt Lake but the routes in and out are somewhat different, although familiar to many of our members. So many have asked for a five-day instead of the old four-day Camp that this longer stay has been arranged with our outfitter, Claude Brewster. Those who find it impossible to stay on till Tuesday will be able to get out on Monday, the 4th, and, if they rise early enough, can catch the regular afternoon bus from Sunshine Lodge to Banff.

The route in (on Friday, August 1st) will be by bus to Sunshine Lodge with lunch at one of the nearby lakes on Simpson Summit, probably Rock Isle Lake. It is not such a long hike in the afternoon to Egypt Lake, the trail to some extent following an old Indian trail used by the Stoneys and the Kootenays on their annual exchange of visits. It is possible to clamber down into Red Earth Pass without a trail, but your Editor, who made the experiment once, does not recommend the procedure.

Egypt Lake is a delightful centre for hiking. The Parks Branch some years ago cut a zig-zag trail up to Haiduk Lake where the whistling marmot is much in evidence. From there on is a pleasant hike in the direction of Shadow Lake, reflecting Mount Ball.

Then near Egypt Lake is the steepish trail to Talc Lake with a thrilling waterfall.

Over Red Earth Pass southwards is the trail to Golden Valley and the Valley of the Rocks in the direction of Mount Assiniboine. Eohippus Lake is a damp spot in which to camp, but has pleasant scenery.

The trail out will be by way of Pharaoh Creek to its junction with Red Earth Creek. This route has been chosen because the sun will be at our back (that is to say if it is shining). At Massive the hikers will pick up the buses to Banff. It is 13 miles from Egypt Lake to Massive, mostly down hill.

The rate for the five days has been fixed at \$26. This rate will include a blanket and gratuities to guides as well as food and tent accommodation. Rental of sleeping bags will be \$4.

On the evening before we start for Sunshine Lodge, we may perhaps be able to arrange a Sing Song somewhere near Banff. The Pow Wow will be at Egypt Lake on Monday evening.

Dates

Friday, August 1st to Tuesday, August 5th.

There will be a preliminary meeting of the Executive Committee at the Mount Royal Hotel at 3 p.m. July 31st.

Send in your request for reservations without delay to Fred Laidlaw, Secretary-Treasurer, who is now stationed for the summer at the Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alberta.

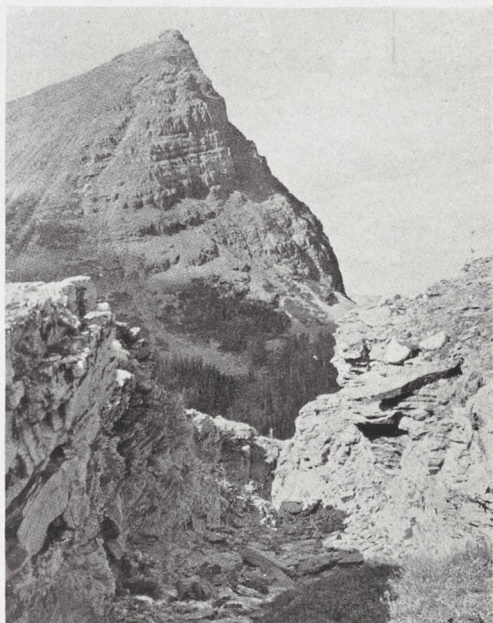


Top: Scarab Lake

*Middle: Scarab Lake
and Pharaoh
Peak*

Below: Pharaoh Peak

*Photos by
Armand Lafrenière*



Journey Into Egypt - August 1947

by Dan. McCowan

ANY mountain trail which leads upwards through fragrant green woods and beside a rushing sparkling stream is alluring in mid-summer. That which gives access to the uplands around Egypt Lake must surely prove heart's desire to those who, seeking respite from the blistering heat of city pavements, would fain walk in the cool shade cast by verdant forest trees. It is an easy trail and broad so that wayfarers may trudge along side by side and talk comfortably about birds and flowers, about vistas, ozone and alpenstocks and, most fruitful subject for discussion on a Sky Line Hike, about camp fire cooking.

Red Earth creek, which has its source in springs and small lakes on the continental divide, enters Bow River at the base of Pilot Mountain about twelve miles west of Banff. Near the mouth of this fast flowing tributary a large bank of reddish clay, exposed during construction of Canadian Pacific Railway, suggested the name by which the stream was henceforth known. It is fed, in part, by Egypt Lake.

Most of the water rushing through Red Earth Canyon comes from Shadow Lake nestling in pine woods at the foot of Mount Ball. When under canvas near Egypt Lake on the forthcoming Sky Line outing you may have opportunity to visit this mountain tarn which belies its name by baring its bosom to the sun throughout the livelong day.

The south branch of the creek is in much less of a hurry and thus meanders through grassy meadows and Alpine glades under the cliffs of the Pharaoh Peaks. No one seems to know when, or by whom, this group of mountains was named. It is of course obvious that their pronounced pyramid form, catching the eye of some bygone hunter or prospector, brought vision of the far-off Nile valley and of the massive mausoleums of bygone rulers of that ancient realm.

The lakes, Egypt, Scarab and Mummy, from their proximity to the Pharaohs, were so named by the late Arthur O. Wheeler then engaged in his notable survey of the Alberta-British Columbia boundary. Of this trio of mountain tarns, Egypt is perhaps least attractive; but being central to several good walking routes and within a stone's throw of a sheltered and sunny camp site will again echo the campfire songs of Sky Line Trail Hikers in early August.

From Egypt Lake a zig-zag trail leads up the hillside to that little Alpine gem called Scarab

Lake. Bounded on one side by green meadows dotted with sturdy Fir and Larch trees and on the other by beetling crags and scree slopes it is the sort of place which plays havoc with one's stock of photo film and holds even the indifferent traveler in thrall. From the unusually heavy snowfall of last winter there should, even in August, be great wreaths on the moors and amongst the rocks above Scarab, serving further to intensify the colour of the lake and of its superb setting.

On flowery slopes sweeping upward from the shore of Scarab the Ptarmigan walk undisturbed with their chicks — the Rosy Finches gather grasshoppers for breakfast food while hardy resident Woodpeckers hammer lustily at the boles and branches of Balsam Firs and render first aid to the Larches. Mountain Bluebirds, azure as the sky above, find nest sites in tree trunks riven by winter gales and form company to the Solitaires singing amidst the splendour of the highland glen.

From Scarab a short walk to a nice waterfall and thence over a rampart of rock brings one to Mummy Lake. Lying, in state, above timber line this blue-green pool is much more austere in setting than are the lower neighbouring lakes. It has however something of the lonesome charm which one associates with Lake McArthur, with Wenckhemna Lake and with other small tarns that mirror only clouds and stars and eagles in flight. While Mummy Lake is in Alberta the southern end almost touches the boundary between that Province and British Columbia.

Continuing along the trail which skirts Scarab Lake the hiker armed with a camera may find good hunting in Whistling Valley. There the Marmots bask on warm boulders, or pipe blithely on their bosun whistles. There also the shy but prudent Conies make hay while the sun shines. A clatter of falling rock debris reveals the presence of a herd of Wild Goats on a dizzy ledge far overhead. Ground Squirrels, commonly called Gophers, stand erect on their earthen mounds the better to view the landscape, and the passers-by. The Chipmunks, then storing fodder against forthcoming famine days, are much too busy to bother about visitors or to pose for pictures.

At the north end of this valley of the Alpine Groundhogs lies Haiduk Lake. There is some difference of opinion about the name given to this small lochan. Wheeler, who named Whistling



Scarab Lake



Photos by Dan McCowan

Mountain waiting for a name — Mummy Lake is just over the Snow Bank in centre of photo.



Pharaoh Creek

Dan McCowan Photo

Valley, said that Haiduk is a Polish word meaning vigorous or lively but the Geographic Board of Canada gives it as a place name in Rumania. Most anglers are agreed that it is a good place to fish. Once, while photographing on the moors north of Scarab, I met three earnest people, viz. Carl Rungius and Mr and Mrs P. Whyte, bound for Haiduk Lake. They were on foot and traveling light — Carl had only a fishing rod and a general purpose landing net which served equally well for collecting butterflies as for the capture of trout. Catherine and Peter bore between them a large frying pan and many times since then have I regretted missing opportunity to make a picture of this trio of supreme optimists. It should in fairness be added that their confidence in Haiduk Lake was not misplaced.

From Haiduk Lake the trail runs downhill to Shadow Lake and return may be made to camp at Egypt by way of upper Red Earth valley. While this is not a strenuous trip one should at the outset be prepared for a good honest all-day hike.

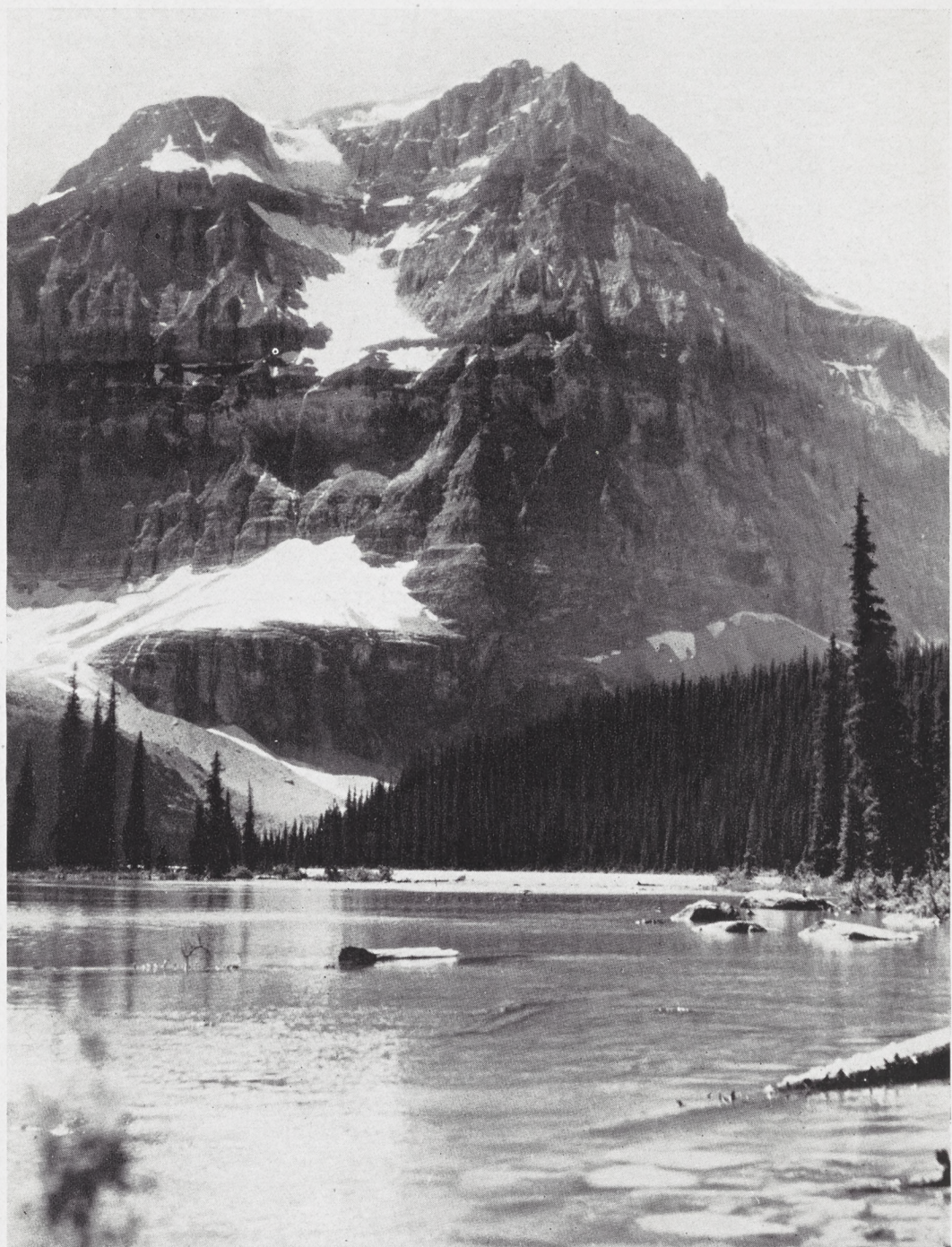
The view from the summit of Red Earth Pass, south of Egypt camp, is ample reward for the uphill hike through the larches. To the north

and west the massive mountains, Storn and Ball, are impressive. In the valley, like tiny drops of mercury, the lakes about the Pharaoh Peaks and the silvery thread of Red Earth creek sparkle in the sunshine. Away to the south are miles and miles of open moorland over which Monarch Mountain stands guard. Far in the distance the great landmark, Mount Assiniboine, reaches to the clouds.

From the camp site deep down in the vale a single column of wood smoke rises above the sombre green forest. It spirals slightly and drifts like a fine blue veil around the base of the pyramids and is slowly wafted over the tree tops towards tranquil Shadow Lake.

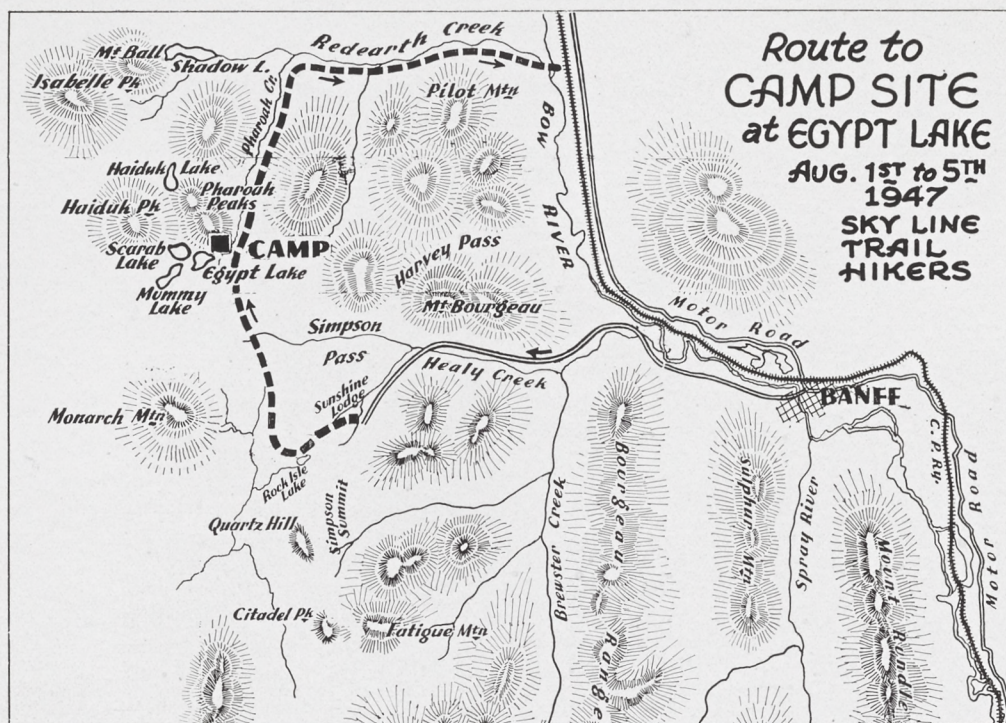
"Must be the Cook gettin' suppers eady; Let's Go".

Charlie Lovell, formerly of Pasadena, California, now residing in Chicago where he is working on that University's Dictionary of Americanisms, announces his engagement to Miss Dix C. Hefley, of Arizona, an ardent hiker, with whom he plans to hike the entire length of the Pacific Crest, traveling over the crest of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Ranges.



Shadow Lake

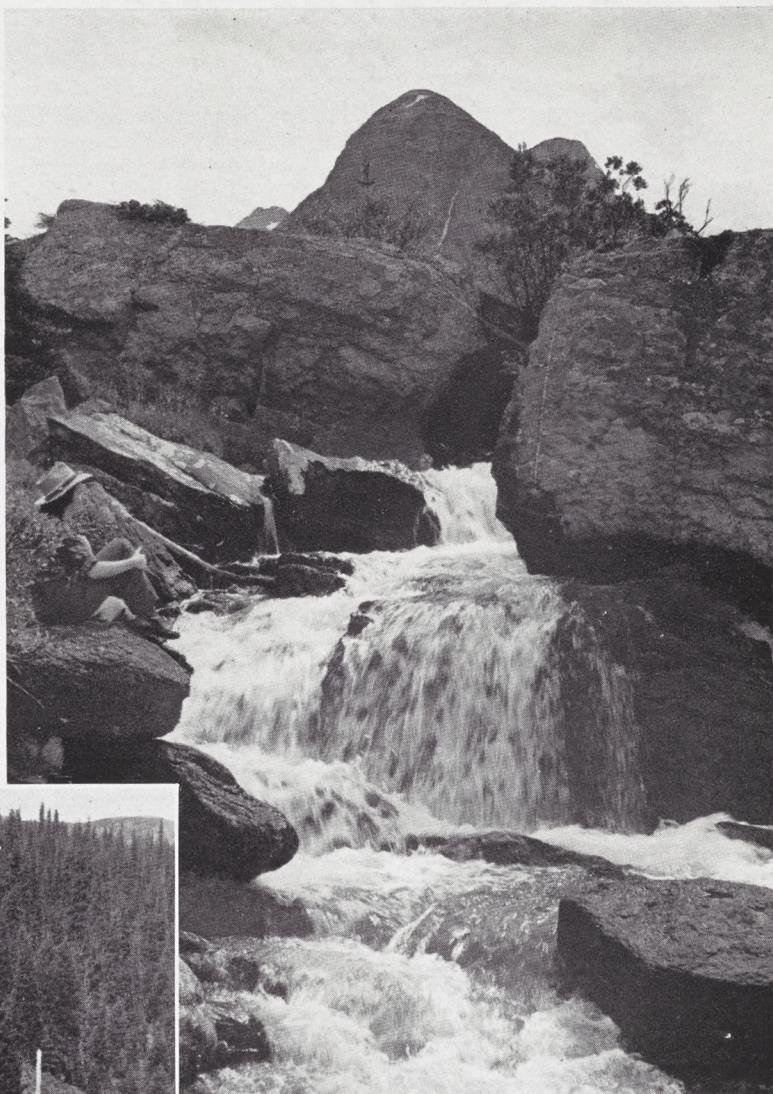
Dan McCowan photo.



Map showing revision of plans, see p. 4



Negotiating a log bridge over Pharaoh



C.P.R. photos



Water Fall at Talc Lake

Creek